



## MA in Spanish Thesis Guidelines and Procedures

Students pursuing an M.A. in Spanish can choose to complete a thesis or non-thesis option. The default option for all entering students is non-thesis. Students who decide to pursue the thesis option should follow the guidelines below.

### Timeline

#### 1st semester of study

- Think about topics and areas of study which interest you most.
- Identify faculty members whose specializations most closely align with your possible topics.
- It is suggested that you take 9 credit hours this semester.

#### 2nd semester of study

- Make sure you have submitted the necessary paperwork to declare a thesis-option M.A.
- Speak with possible thesis directors as well as committee members about your ideas and possible avenues for research.
- It is suggested that you take 9 credit hours during this semester.

#### 3rd semester of study

- Working with faculty, you should define the topic and general methodology for the thesis project.
- As early as possible in this semester, you need to identify a thesis director who will assist you in forming a thesis committee as well as help you to define the scope of your topic and the particular methodology/theoretical foundation of your project.
- It is highly recommended that you begin your research of primary and secondary sources as early in this semester as possible.
- The thesis proposal must be approved by your thesis committee by the end of this semester.
- It is suggested that you take 6 credit hours this semester.

#### 4th semester of study (see last page for a step-by-step timeline for thesis semester)

- Working closely with your director, you should carry out the thesis project adhering to the proposed timeline.
- Be aware of the deadlines for drafts and revisions found in the “Writing, Revising, Defending and Submitting the Thesis” section of the guidelines in addition to those found on the Graduate School’s webpage.
- You should work diligently leaving sufficient time for revisions put forth by your director and your thesis advisory committee.
- It is suggested you take 6 credit hours this semester.

\*This timeline assumes a student is attending full-time and plans to graduate after four semesters of enrollment. If a student is completing the degree at a different pace, it is recommended that the “4th semester of study” be considered the final semester, the “3rd semester of study” be the penultimate semester, etc.



## Thesis Advisory Committee

Students should begin to think about developing a topic for their thesis and possible members of their thesis advisory committee during their second semester of coursework. After consulting with faculty and formulating a focused topic, students should meet with a member of the graduate faculty to ascertain if they are willing and able to serve as the director of their thesis project. Because the director will be the student's mentor during the writing of the thesis, students should select a director with whom they have a good working relationship and from whom they can receive constructive and timely feedback.

In consultation with the thesis director, the student will seek two additional members of the thesis advisory committee; one member may be from outside the Department of World Languages and Cultures, if appropriate. If choosing an "external" reader, keep in mind that all theses are written in Spanish and require all members of the committee to be proficient in Spanish. The thesis advisory committee will read and comment on drafts of the thesis and administer the oral defense of the thesis. The decision of the committee concerning the student's performance during the oral defense is final.

## Thesis Proposal

The thesis should be proposed by the end of the semester preceding the semester in which the student intends to enroll in SPN 599 and complete the thesis. The proposal should be developed in consultation with the director and thesis advisory committee. The proposal must be approved by the thesis director and the advisory committee. After receiving the approval of the committee, the student must provide a copy of the approved proposal and signed cover sheet to the Graduate Coordinator. Thesis proposals must be completed by end of the semester before the student writes the thesis.

Proposals should be between three and five pages in length (exclusive of bibliographical information and timeline) and include a statement of the research question/thesis statement, a description of the theoretical and/or methodological approach utilized, as well as a very brief overview of the most relevant literature on the proposed topic. The proposal should explain to readers what the student hopes to demonstrate through writing the thesis. The student should also include a working bibliography that includes relevant primary and secondary sources. On a separate page, the student must provide a timeline of significant milestones in the research and writing process and the approximate dates of their completion.

## Writing, Revising, Defending and Submitting the Thesis

Students must enroll in three hours of SPN 599 during the semester in which they plan to write and defend their thesis. Students must be prepared to spend significant time each week doing research and writing in order to complete their projects in a timely fashion.

Students should use the timeline submitted with the proposal as a guide for completing drafts of sections of the thesis. Keeping to this schedule aids in successful completion of the project. Thesis directors should provide feedback to drafts of the sections of the thesis as they are written, and students should be prepared to address the director's response through significant revisions, which may require rewriting, further research, and even reconsideration of some portions of their arguments.



Students should be prepared to write various revisions of each section of the thesis. In addition to working with their directors, students should be in frequent contact with the other members of the advisory committee to seek input and guidance.

The length of the thesis should be agreed upon between the student and their director. As this is a 3 credit-hour project, theses generally range between 30-50 pages in length. Students should discuss with their director and committee their expectations taking into consideration the subject matter, field of study, etc.

Once the thesis has been drafted and revised to the student's and director's satisfaction, students should give the revised versions to the other two members of the committee.

The committee should receive the revised draft no later than a month before the end of classes in the semester in which the student plans to graduate. Because the readers may have further suggestions for rethinking and revision, failure to allow them ample time to respond to the thesis may result in the delay of a student's oral defense and graduation.

The deadline each semester is announced at the Graduate School website, usually the end of March for May graduates and the middle of November for December graduates. This draft submission is checked for proper formatting; content is not reviewed at this time.

A month prior to the end of the semester, students should also schedule a date and time for their thesis defenses in consultation with their directors and advisory committees. The student or the director should formally reserve a room for the defense with the help of the office staff. This date should adhere to the Graduate School's deadline for completion of oral defenses, which usually stipulates the first of December for Fall graduates and mid-April for Spring graduates.

Students should give their advisory committees a clean and revised copy of the thesis at least two weeks before the thesis defense. Assuming that the thesis defense is successful, the student will have a week or two to complete additional revisions before the Graduate School's final deadline for submission of approved theses.

If the director or advisory committee members indicate that the thesis is not defensible, they may ask the student to do further revisions and postpone the defense until the next semester. Scheduling the defense does not imply that the thesis is ready to defend or imply the tacit approval of the committee. The director and the committee should only hold the defense when the project is complete.

The student's performance at the thesis defense is evaluated by the committee and factors into their assessment of the successful completion of the work for the MA degree. The format for the presentation and the defense should be developed in conjunction with the student, their director, and the advisory committee. The decision of the committee concerning the student's performance during the oral defense is final.

After the format of the thesis has been approved, the thesis has been successfully defended, and the director and advisory committee have approved any additional revisions, the student should submit a pdf of the thesis electronically to the Graduate School; consult the Graduate School's [website](#) for guidelines.



A pdf of the approved thesis should also be emailed to the Graduate Coordinator for archiving. The preparation of the thesis must follow the MLA Style Manual guidelines, together with those regulations issued by the Graduate School. Students should refer to the Thesis Format Manual, available from the [Graduate School](#), for further details about thesis format and submission procedures.

✓	Deadline	Task
	A month prior to the end of the semester	Submit revised draft of the thesis to all members of the thesis advisory committee.
	A month prior to the end of the semester	Schedule a date and time for thesis defense in consultation with the director and advisory committee, schedule a room, send graduate coordinator the details.
	Two weeks prior to the defense of the thesis	Give the advisory committee a clean and revised copy of the thesis at least two weeks before the thesis defense.
	Spring: April 15 Fall: November 15	A draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School for <i>formatting</i> (not content) approval, together with a <a href="#">Format Approval Sheet</a> .
	Spring: by late April Fall: by late November	Successfully present and defend the thesis to the satisfaction of the director and thesis advisory committee.
	ASAP after incorporating requested changes after defense	Submit a pdf of the thesis electronically to the Graduate School; consult the Graduate School's <a href="#">website</a> for guidelines.
	By Reading Day	A pdf of the approved thesis should also be emailed to the Graduate Coordinator to be archived in the Department.